

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS OF LEARNERS

Dispositions are the values, commitments and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward students, families and caretakers, colleagues and communities that impact student learning, motivation and character development, as well as the educator's own professional growth. If sincerely held, dispositions should lead to professional conduct and enable human flourishing.

For Grand Canyon University College of Education (COE) candidates and alumni, these dispositions emerge from the university's [Christian worldview and mission statement](#) and align with the COE [Core Values](#). The COE Core Values include five values — *love, respect, integrity, compassion and service* — that serve as a moral compass for the college, shape the Christian character and identity of the community and play a pivotal role in fostering a shared sense of purpose, unity and ethical behavior in the field of education.

GCU's COE provides a biblically-rooted college education emphasizing community and character in the context of a Christian worldview, preparing candidates to teach, reinforce, support and contemplate Christian values that can lead to a fulfilling, godly life. These Christian values are integral to the development, maturation and education of ethically and morally sound individuals who continue the path of lifelong learning, leading and service. For COE candidates and alumni, the core values are our roots and the professional dispositions are the trunk of our educational tree.

THE COE PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS OF LEARNERS INCLUDE:

1. High expectations
2. Respect for the diversity of others
3. Fairness
4. Professional conduct
5. Reflection
6. Curiosity
7. Honesty
8. Compassion
9. Advocacy
10. Dedication

HIGH EXPECTATIONS

Educators within the COE believe that all students have a God-given capacity to learn and should set and support realistic, yet rigorous, expectations for student success. Educators should maintain high expectations in their own academic endeavors as well as in building positive character traits by modeling through all interactions and decision making leading to human flourishing.

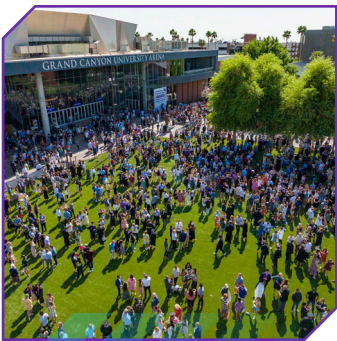
In addition, candidates are expected to set academic and personal/character goals and uphold high personal expectations. Goals for candidates' achievement are based on the tenets of critical thinking and a global perspective of the educational community with an emphasis on collaboration and teamwork.



High expectations is demonstrated by the behaviors aligning to the COE Core Values of **service, compassion** and **respect**, which include:

- Identifying both strengths and opportunities in students through assessments
- Using knowledge and data to individualize instruction for each student
- Monitoring and assessing in real-time and changing practice almost as quickly
- Knowing students and their interests and abilities in order to serve the whole child
- Communicating expectations positively and respectfully through a variety of methods
- Including students in the planning of the classroom goals
- Praying for the academic, physical and spiritual needs of each student

And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father. – Colossians 3:17 NLT



RESPECT FOR THE DIVERSITY OF OTHERS

Educators within the COE believe that all people are created in God's image regardless of background, beliefs or circumstances and therefore are deserving of respect. Respect entails acknowledging both similarities and differences while actively listening, building trust and modeling civility, courtesy and sensitivity in interactions with students, families and caregivers, colleagues and communities.

Educators within the COE strive to build a culture of mutual respect, care, tolerance and fellowship among themselves, candidates and PreK-12 colleagues. COE candidates are asked to display the knowledge, skills and dispositions required to meet the needs of students from

different backgrounds, thereby demonstrating good character. Within this nurturing and loving environment, COE candidates express and demonstrate awareness of the important individual and cultural differences that form the rich cultural tapestry of a global society.

Respect for the diversity of others is demonstrated by the following behaviors, aligning to the COE Core Values of **respect, love** and **integrity**:

- Understanding societal and cultural forces that impact equity as they relate to educating learners of varying cultures, races, abilities, religions, languages and creeds
- Embracing diversity and inclusion through a Christian worldview lens
- Drawing on diversity of thought and practice to cast light on different perspectives
- Celebrating the potential of diversity
- Appreciating and seeking to empathize with students, families and guardians and school staff from different backgrounds and cultures
- Setting clear expectations around respect for others and ensuring consistent consequences for inappropriate or disrespectful behavior toward others
- Challenging students to report inappropriate behavior that is disrespectful to the diversity of others, providing a positive and supportive environment that allows students to feel safe when reporting it

*Respect everyone, and love the family of believers. Fear God, and respect the king.
– 1 Peter 2:17 NLT*

FAIRNESS

Educators within the COE believe that love, grace, kindness and understanding give substance to the concept of fairness. Educators should promote equitable opportunities for students to access resources and materials that lead to growth and development, maintain appropriate standards of confidentiality and exercise fairness in all areas of teaching and learning. Educators should aim to ensure that all students are treated in a manner consistent with the Golden Rule. Jesus says, "Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you," (Matthew 7:12 NLT). Educators exercise fairness through the ways they treat all students and in their teaching practices. Doing so helps to enable the pursuit of human flourishing.



Fairness is demonstrated by the following behaviors, aligning to the COE Core Values of **love, respect** and **compassion**:

- Building positive relationships with students
- Engaging students in educational conversations
- Taking time to understand student issues and concerns
- Assessing student learning consistently and without bias
- Guiding students through the problem-solving process
- Seeking to understand the unique issues and challenges facing students
- Implementing differentiated instruction catering to diverse learning styles, needs and abilities
- Providing all students with access to high-quality learning materials, technology and educational experiences.

Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets. – Matthew 7:12 NLT

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Educators within the COE should conduct themselves as professionals and serve as role models within their community. Professional conduct for educators can be defined as the way in which an individual exercises sound judgment and makes ethical or moral decisions as dilemmas arise in and out of school settings.

In addition to academic qualifications, a professional educator must act in an ethical manner based on codes of conduct like the Model Code of Ethics for Educators and the pursuit of the common good. Educators must be prepared to teach all students, regardless of context or setting. Educators' professional conduct and character is not confined to the classroom, but also extends outside it as well. Educators must model ethical behavior and exhibit integrity, exhibiting professional traits and skills ranging from punctuality and consistent attendance to proactive attitudes in all settings.

Professional conduct is demonstrated by the following behaviors, aligning to the COE Core Values of **love, respect, integrity, compassion** and **service**:

- Exhibiting professionalism (timeliness, attendance, attire, attitudes) in university and school settings
- Acting in congruence with all university, district/school, local, state and national policies and laws that govern education
- Maintaining confidentiality for student privacy in alignment with Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (20 U.S.C. § 1232g) (FERPA) guidelines
- Committing to teach all students with the belief all students have the ability to learn
- Communicating and interacting appropriately, frequently, fairly and effectively with kindness and understanding with all stakeholders (students, families, colleagues, external stakeholders) even when addressing mistakes or failures

- Demonstrating respect, accountability, integrity and resourcefulness with self, colleagues, students and school property
- Actively participating in school and professional learning communities
- Encouraging forgiveness and growth through constructive feedback and support

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. – Philippians 4:8 NIV



REFLECTION

Educators within the COE believe teaching is a journey of introspection guided by faith and seeking to better serve God and the students entrusted to them. Educators should be thoughtful about their professional practice, critically examine it and seek continual improvement.

Reflective practice is at the heart of teaching and character development. Effective educators continuously reflect on their personal character and professional decision making. By reflecting on context and using data, as well as students' academic and social needs, educators can gauge student learning and adjust instructional focus. Reflection is key to the cycle of

learning, leading and serving the lives of those entrusted to them.

Reflection is demonstrated by the following behaviors, aligning to the COE Core Values of **love, respect, compassion** and **service**:

- Seeking feedback to measure the effectiveness of processes
- Using feedback to change ineffective processes
- Monitoring and adjusting actions based on reflective practices
- Observing others in practice and learning from the experience
- Asking questions of colleagues and supervisors
- Making time for the reflective process daily
- Developing ethical decision making, character development and student support
- Examining motivation and purpose through prayer and meditation on scripture

And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you. – Philippians 4:8-9 NLT

CURIOSITY

Educators within the COE believe in cultivating a classroom environment where curiosity is a tool for acquiring knowledge and a reflection of faith, wonder and a lifelong commitment to learning about the world.

Educators promote curiosity by helping students discover new ideas and helping them become lifelong learners and individuals of good character. Connecting curiosity to character and cognitive development may result in students' academic and personal success. Creating learning environments focused on intellectual curiosity can help sustain high academic performance and achievement for all learners.

Curiosity is demonstrated by the following behaviors, aligning to the COE Core Values of **compassion, integrity** and **service**:

- Promoting curiosity in the learning environment
- Challenging and motivating students to think innovatively and critically and engage in active inquiry
- Encouraging collaboration and teamwork to solve problems
- Maintaining a humble posture, open to learning from students, colleagues and the world around them
- Engaging in professional and personal development to expand knowledge and skills
- Seeking a biblical perspective when engaging in new initiatives
- Exercising critical thinking when given extracurricular content to implement



Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. – Matthew 6:33 NLT

HONESTY

Educators within the COE believe honesty encompasses integrity, transparency and a commitment to professional authenticity. Educators should model integrity through their words and actions. They should be forthright with others and uphold standards of trust, character and integrity.

As servant leaders, it is essential that educators exhibit honesty in the classroom to meet the academic program goals and individual learning goals of the students in their classroom. This allows educators to develop meaningful professional relationships, support personal and student character development and integrate various perspectives that can enhance the educational environment.

Honesty is demonstrated by the following behaviors, aligning with the COE Core Values of **integrity** and **respect**:

- Speaking with truth, love and respect to students, parents and guardians and colleagues
- Being transparent and consistent in decision-making processes
- Ensuring that input from all stakeholders is included
- Keeping students at the center of decision-making processes
- Upholding established school policies
- Admitting challenges or mistakes openly and honestly and demonstrating humility
- Guiding students to understand the benefits of honesty, the consequences of dishonesty and encouraging students to make ethical choices
- Encouraging open dialogue and respectful expression of viewpoints in the classroom

*If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities.
– Luke 16:10 NLT*

COMPASSION

Educators within the COE believe serving students and the community is an extension of the hands and feet of Jesus. Compassion is a force rooted in faith and manifested in actions that lead to transformation. Educators should demonstrate professional friendliness and genuine caring in their relationships with others while providing academic, emotional and spiritual support.

Candidates address the university's Christian mission as it applies to compassion throughout their academic experience. Engaging in on- and off-campus service events personifies compassionate, active engagement that promotes the emotional, spiritual and intellectual growth of educators and their students. Through these and other opportunities, candidates exhibit an in-depth understanding of the compassion required of professionals in their field.

Compassion is demonstrated by the following behaviors, aligning to the COE Core Values of **love**, **respect** and **compassion**:

- Giving grace and showing genuine thoughtfulness towards students and others
- Acknowledging students' challenges and needs with empathetic support
- Being genuinely interested in students
- Taking time to converse with students beyond the scope of the classroom
- Knowing your students beyond the academic picture
- Showing empathy, providing guidance and validating students' emotions, particularly during challenging times
- Encouraging acts of kindness, empathy, generosity and support among students

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. – Ephesians 4:32 NIV



ADVOCACY

Educators within the COE believe advocacy means being the hands and feet of Jesus by prioritizing the needs of students and others above our own in both words and actions. Educators should seek to promote positive change in schools and communities.

Educators understand the effect of servant leadership as it applies to the welfare of others in the educational setting. This is personified through awareness of teaching and learning concerns that may arise for students and the larger school community. Educators use their compassion for the welfare of others to help where they can and to the best of their ability.

Advocacy is demonstrated by the following behaviors, aligning to the COE Core Values of **love**, **integrity** and **service**:

- Building positive relationships with students and families/caregivers
- Engaging students in meaningful discussions beyond the scope of the classroom
- Prioritizing student needs alongside colleagues and caregivers
- Taking time to understand and support student and family issues, concerns and needs
- Guiding students through the problem-solving process
- Sincerely getting to know students' interests and needs
- Connecting with community organizations and stakeholders to build partnerships and leveraging collective resources for a wider impact
- Integrating ethical values into the teaching and learning process
- Engaging in constructive dialogue with community members and decision makers

Learn to do good. Seek justice. Help the oppressed. Defend the cause of orphans. Fight for the rights of widows. – Isaiah 1:17 NLT

DEDICATION

Educators within the COE believe in committing to teaching and learning, to their own character formation and to ethical decision making. They should be lifelong learners who seek opportunities for professional growth.

God puts it into the hearts of his own to minister to his children through teaching, as well as his word. To do this effectively, educators must be committed to the profession. The credentialing degree should serve only as the start of lifelong learning and professional development opportunities, including engaging with scholarship and professional organizations.

Dedication is demonstrated by the following behaviors, aligning to the COE Core Values of **love, respect, integrity, compassion** and **service**:

- Timeliness, consistent attendance and engagement in school settings
- Modeling a positive attitude, character and ethical decision making
- Engagement in professional development
- Participation in educational social networks
- Persevering through professional challenges
- Embracing and adapting to change
- Participation in committees or learning communities, conducting research and engaging with the school community

So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless. – 1 Corinthians 15:58 NLT

SUMMARY

The COE Professional Dispositions of Learners encompass the values, commitments and professional ethics that should guide an educator's behavior toward uplifting students, families, colleagues and communities. The dispositions significantly impact student learning, achievement, motivation, character development and the educator's own professional growth.

Educators within the COE believe teaching is the purpose for which God created us. Teaching is a calling of the heart. Teaching involves whole-heartedly loving the profession and all that accompanies it. Love encompasses intentional actions such as providing unconditional support to students, uplifting students to facilitate their growth and development and holding oneself to high standards through each of the COE's Professional Dispositions of Learners, the COE's Core Values of love, respect, integrity, compassion and service and the Model Code of Ethics for Educators.



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